

The committee, consisting of Mr. Wadsworth, Mr. Irwine [sic] and Mr. White, to whom was referred the petition of the French and American inhabitants of Post St. Vincent's and the Illinois, by their agent, Mr. Tardiveau, beg leave to report

THE COMMITTEE, consisting of **Mr. WADSWORTH, Mr. IRWINE** and **Mr. WHITE**, to whom was referred the Petition of the French and American inhabitants of Post St. Vincent's and the Illinois, by their Agent, **Mr. TARDIVEAU**, beg leave to report, That as there is much uncertainty about the possessions of the inhabitants of the country upon the Wabash and Mississippi rivers, and the quantities of land that they may be entitled respectively to hold and enjoy, by rights acquired before they became subjects of the United States; in order to quite their minds, to maintain them on their just rights, and extend to them the liberality of the United States, they submit the following resolutions, viz.

RESOLVED, That the Governor of the Western Territory shall cause to be surveyed and laid out, as soon as may be, a Tract of Land upon the Wabash River, bounded in the following manner, to wit: Beginning at the place where the River a Maries fall into the Wabash; and running thence east eight miles; thence north to the southern boundary line of a tract of land lately agreed for by the Board of Treasury, with Messrs. Flint and Parker; thence with that line to the Wabash, and across the same twenty miles; thence due north, so far as to meet a due west line drawn from the point of beginning.—Also, one other Tract of Land upon the Mississippi, bounded in the following manner, viz. Beginning at the mouth of the Wood River, and running with the southern boundary line of a tract of land, lately agreed for by the Board of Treasury, with Messrs. Flint and Parker, to the Kaskaskias River; thence southerly until it meets the Mississippi at the mouth of the River

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au Vase; thence with that river to the place of beginning, and including all the islands in that river near to the eastern bank of the same; which two Tracts of Land will contain and circumscribe all the settlements made by the ancient French inhabitants, except such as may have been within the tract agreed for with Flint and Parker upon the Illinois River, and the rights of each as may have been settled thereon, and provided for by the agreement with them.

RESOLVED, That the Governor of the Western Territory shall cause, as soon as may be, due enquiry to be made into the claims to lands of the inhabitants of the country upon the Wabash and Mississippi Rivers; and where it shall be ascertained, either by records that have been preserved in the country, or by authentic writings in the possession of the parties claiming, which may not have been recorded, that lands may have been granted to any of the said inhabitants by the French government, or conceded to them by the military officers in command there from time to time-or by the Intendant or other civil officer of that Crown, who may have been entrusted with the distribution of lands; he shall, provided the quantity expressed in such grant does not exceed four hundred acres, on the application of the said inhabitants respectively, or of their heirs or legal representatives, cause the same to be surveyed and laid out, agreeably to the descriptions in the said writings and records contained, at their own proper costs and charges; and shall grant letters patent, under the seal of the government, and counter-signed by the Secretary, confirming the same to the said parties, and to their heirs and assigns for ever; to the inhabitants of the country upon the Wabash the lands to be laid out in the tract upon the Wabash, and to the inhabitants of the Mississippi in the tract upon the Mississippi.

And whereas it may be, that persons may have acquired equitable titles to lands under some peculiar customs established and recognized in the ancient French Colonies, where no actual grants have passed in that case: **RESOLVED**, That the Governor of the Western Territory, wherever it shall be made satisfactorily to appear by any of the inhabitants of the countries upon the Wabash and Mississippi Rivers, or by the heirs or legal representatives of any persons who have heretofore been inhabitants of the same, that they or their

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predecessors respectively had acquired equitable or customary rights to lands, shall cause to be surveyed for each on their applying for the same, and at their proper costs and charges, four hundred acres of land, within either of the before described tracts of land, in that upon the Wabash for the inhabitants upon the Wabash, and in that upon the Mississippi for those upon the Mississippi; and issue letters patent under the seal of the government, granting the same to the individuals and to their heirs and assigns for ever.

And whereas the country upon the Wabash and Mississippi Rivers, was, by the Treaty of Paris, 1763, ceded to the Crown of Great-Britain, and grants of land may have been made to individuals inhabiting there, by the officers of that Crown: **RESOLVED**, that the Governor of the Western Territory shall cause like enquiries to be made, as in the cases of the ancient French inhabitants, and order the lands to be surveyed and laid out for them respectively, within the bounds of the before described tracts of land; and, under the same limitations and restrictions, issue letters patent confirming the same to them and their heirs and assigns respectively for ever.

And whereas from the conquest of the country upon the Wabash and Mississippi Rivers, until the cession made by the State of Virginia to the United States, the same was under the dominion of that State, and many persons may have removed during that period into the said country, and have acquired legal or equitable titles to lands under the laws or customs of Virginia: **RESOLVED**, That the Governor of the Western Territory shall cause due enquiry to be made into the same, and, upon the same being ascertained, to order the lands to be surveyed and laid out for the persons claiming the same, their heirs or legal representatives, within either of the before described tracts of land, and issue letters patent confirming them to them, and their heirs and assigns for ever, under and subject to the same regulations, limitations and restrictions, as are prescribed in the case of the French and English inhabitants.

And whereas it may be that within the boundaries of the before described tracts of land upon the Wabash and Mississippi Rivers, after all the claims of the inhabitants, whether

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legal or equitable, to any quantity of land not exceeding four hundred acres for each, shall have been satisfied, there may yet remain an overplus: **RESOLVED**, That the Governor of the Western Territory may, and he is hereby empowered and directed, upon application, to order the same to be surveyed and laid out for any person or persons, in quantities not exceeding four hundred acres for each applicant; and to issue letters patent, granting and confirming the same to the said applicants respectively, and to their heirs and assigns for ever, they paying for the same at the rate of per acre, any thing in the powers to the Board of Treasury to dispose of Western Territory notwithstanding; out of which powers the before described tracts of land upon the Wabash and Mississippi Rivers are hereby expressly excepted.

RESOLVED, That where the claims to lands of the inhabitants of the country upon the Wabash and Mississippi rivers, whether legal or equitable, do not amount to four hundred acres for each; the Governor of the Western Territory may, and he is hereby empowered, at the request of the parties, to grant to the parties a quantity in addition, that shall make up four hundred acres for each inhabitant; and provided, that in all cases where the claim exceeds that quantity he shall report the same, with all the circumstances attending it, to Congress, for their decision: And to the end that the business may be conducted with safety and propriety, as well for the United States as for the individuals interested,

RESOLVED, That the Governor shall erect an office, where all persons claiming lands under grants from the crown of France, the government of Great-Britain, or the state of Virginia, shall present the same, or authentic copies of the records, where the same may have been preserved, and from which warrants of survey shall issue to the surveyors to be appointed to lay out the same, which surveyors, before they enter upon the execution of their office, shall take an oath or affirmation of fidelity to the United States, and for the due and faithful execution of their offices respectively, before they enter on the same, which warrants, together with plots of the tracts of land, shall be returned to and filed in the said office, before any patent shall issue; and in all cases where equitable titles shall have been ascertained, the Governor shall certify the same, under his hand and seal, to the

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party, which certificate shall be recorded in the said office, and warrants of survey issued thereupon, and return of the warrants, together with the plots of the land, be returned and filed before any patent for the same shall issue: And the Secretary of the Government shall make return once in every three months to the Secretary of Congress of all warrants issued by the Governor in pursuance of the foregoing resolutions.